

January, 1895.

*To the Chairman and Members of the Hardingstone
Rural Sanitary Authority.*

GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present my Annual Report, with the usual Statistics, for the year 1894.

The Population of the District for many years has undergone little change; in fact, has shown a slight tendency, if anything, to decrease; so I have estimated it at 8,420, at which figures it stood in the census year of 1891.

The total number of Deaths during the year was 115, giving a death-rate of 13·8 per 1,000, compared with 131 and a death-rate of 15·5 in 1893. This is quite the lowest death-rate that has been recorded during the last ten years, the nearest approach to it being in 1887, when the death-rate was 14·5. The number of deaths in the Hardingstone District was remarkably small—only 19 deaths in a population of 2,323—being only about a death-rate of 8 per 1,000. In the other two Districts the mortality was slightly greater than in 1893. The mortality was exceptionally high in the villages of Denton, Brafield, and Roade, though there was no special mortality from any particular disease.

The number of Births during the year was 229, compared with 204 in 1893, giving a birth-rate of 27·2 per 1,000, as compared with 24·2 in 1893, which was the lowest birth-rate since 1884.

The only deaths from true Zymotic Disease recorded in the Table is one from Puerperal Fever at Quinton; besides this, however, one case of Typhoid Fever was removed from Roade into the Northampton General Infirmary, and died there. There were also three deaths in children from Whooping Cough.

The total number of cases notified under the Notification Act was 73 (62 in 1893), of which 50 were cases of Scarlet Fever. Of these 50 cases 20 were notified in the village of Milton and 20 in Brafield. The cases in Milton all arose from one boy who was found to be attending school whilst his hands were peeling. This case had seen no doctor, and was not notified, so a prosecution was instituted by your Board, and a conviction followed. As might be expected, the disease extended rapidly into all parts of the village, but caused no deaths. In Brafield the disease also was not discovered (as it was of a very mild type, and no doctor was called in) until several children were found to be suffering from it, and it was too late to thoroughly enforce any isolation, as the cases were scattered all over the village. Seven cases occurred at an isolated Farm in Hackleton, but they were promptly removed to the Infectious Hospital, and there was no spread of the disease. It seemed to me to arise from defective drains in the Farm-house, which have since been put right. Four cases of Scarlet Fever occurred in one family at Collingtree, probably spread from the adjoining village of Milton; but early notice was given of them, and they were promptly removed to the Infectious Hospital, so there was no spread in this village.

Two very slight cases of Diphtheria were reported at Hardingstone and one at Collingtree. The two cases reported from Roade were, however, more severe, and the drains and closets of these cottages were very bad. They have now been put in good order.

Of the cases of Enteric Fever 11 occurred at Roade. Four of these were in three adjoining cottages at one end of the village, and the drainage from these cottages was found to be very defective. The remaining seven cases occurred in one family, and kept breaking out at intervals. I could find no satisfactory explanation of their origin, but the drains and closets were all overhauled and put in a much better state. The case that died in the Northampton Infirmary belonged to this family. There was one mild case of Typhoid at Little Houghton, and the other case was removed from Wootton to the Northampton Infirmary—as the Infectious Hospital was full of cases of Scarlet Fever—and died there, when the cause of death was found to be Tubercles Meningitis, a disease very difficult to distinguish in its early stages from Typhoid Fever. an'

During the year the Infectious Hospital just erected at Hardingstone has been occupied, and has been found of great service. Three cases of Typhoid Fever from Roade have been treated in it, 21 cases of Scarlet Fever from different parts of the District, and six cases from another District—the Hardingstone Local Board. The average stay in Hospital of each case has been six weeks and one day, and the Hospital has been in almost continuous use throughout the year. As the patients from the Local Board have been charged 2½ guineas per week during their stay in Hospital, the expenses of management and maintenance have been greatly curtailed, and the first year of the new Hospital has been a most successful one.

The Drainage Scheme, in a modified form, is now being carried out at Yardley Hastings, but it is not yet sufficiently advanced to form any opinion as to its merits.

The Drainage Scheme at Roade is still in abeyance. An enquiry was held by Colonel Ducat, who has expressed his disapproval of the first Scheme, and the matter is now receiving consideration.

Land has been acquired at Hardingstone for a Sewage Farm, and the drains have been completed, so that the sewage from this village is now purified before entering the river.

The question of Draining the village of Collingtree has also been considered. All the sewage now flows into a brook where watercress is grown for market purposes. This is a very dangerous and dirty proceeding; and I consider that the best plan would be to lay a new main drain straight down the village past the Rectory, and put the sewage over land, as at Hardingstone, before it is allowed to enter the brook. This is the only safe plan, and in the end will prove the most economical.

New Burial Grounds have been opened at Roade and Wootton, and are now being used.

It has been determined to put in force a set of Bye-laws for the chief villages in the District, as the want of such Laws has been greatly felt, and a Sub-Committee has met several times, and agreed on such Laws which now only await the sanction of the Local Government Board.

These, Gentlemen, are the principal events that have occurred during the year; other routine matters have received attention, but call for no comment.

I have again to notice the very valuable services of Mr. ABBOTT, your Sanitary Inspector, during the year.

I am, Gentlemen,

Yours faithfully,

G. H. PERCIVAL, M.B.,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

